



For immediate release
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City receives award for land conservation effort

The City of San Antonio will be recognized for its initiatives to acquire sensitive properties located over the Edwards Aquifer in what is seen as one of the largest and most successful land conservation efforts in Texas.

San Antonio will be honored Friday, Feb. 22, at the 2008 Texas Land Trust Conference, "Conservation at Work in Your Community," in Austin. The City will be lauded as one of three Conservation Success Stories.

The City purchased about 6,500 acres in Bexar County for aquifer protection through the initial \$45 million program approved in 2000. Following the success of that program, voters in 2005 instated a new 1/8-cent addition to the local sales tax to collect up to \$90 million to acquire interests in sensitive properties located over the aquifer.

San Antonio to date has protected an additional 21,381 acres, bringing the current total of protected land to 27,881 acres over the aquifer in Bexar, Medina and Uvalde counties, primarily through the use of conservation easements. Current projections anticipate another 40,000 to 60,000 acres will be protected before completion of this program. Many of the properties are former ranches and estates that are characterized by unique natural and man-made features and hilltops.

Before the 2000 and 2005 elections, there were no programs designed to identify and protect sensitive land located over the aquifer.

The aquifer stretches across thousands of acres over several counties in South Central Texas. Roughly 70 percent of the recharge zone is located west of Bexar County. Following acquisition, the environmental characteristics of each of the acquired properties will continue to be evaluated. Protection of their natural assets is carefully considered before funding is allocated.